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ABSTRACT

The Workers' Educational Association (WEA) is a national voluntary organization dedicated to giving adults in the United Kingdom access to organized learning. The International Federation of Workers' Educational Associations (IFWEA), which was founded in 1947 largely at the initiative of the WEA, is composed of more than 100 organizations in 54 countries that are active in promoting and delivering workers' education. The WEA and the IFWEA responded to the Department for International Development (DfID) paper "Strengthening DfID's Support for Civil Society" by presenting their views on the following topics: workers' education and civil society; international development and civil society in the United Kingdom and in the global civil society; civil society, government, and partnerships; civil society and the trade union movement; trade unions and development awareness; trade unions as agents of civil society; and international trade unions as strategic partners. It was concluded that engagement with workers' education organizations would enhance the British government's international development policies and that further DfID engagement with workers' education organizations would better contribute to elimination of world poverty. (Appended are the addresses of contact persons at the WEA and IFWEA and lists of organizations affiliated with the WEA and IFWEA.) (MN)

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WEA

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Workers' Education, Civil Society and International Development

The WEA response to the Department for International Development (DfID) Consultation Paper: **'Strengthening DfID's Support for Civil Society'**.

This is the contribution of the Workers' Educational Association to the Consultation Paper prepared by the Department for International Development - Strengthening DfID's Support for Civil Society. The submission presents the views of the WEA, the International Federation of Workers' Education Associations (IFWEA), and the European Workers' Education Association (Euro-WEA).

IFWEA's regional representatives in Asia-Pacific, Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, and central and eastern Europe have been circulated with details of the Consultation Paper. This paper incorporates their comments.

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August 1998

Front Cover Photographs: WEA Technical Support Programme to the Zambia Workers' Education Association

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The WEA in Summary

The Workers' Educational Association is a national voluntary organisation existing primarily to provide adults with access to organised learning, designed to develop their intellectual understanding, confidence and social and collective responsibility.

The WEA was formed in 1903, and is a registered charity; it is non-party in politics and non-sectarian in religion. Its charitable aims and objects include:

- "providing in particular for the needs of working class adults and of those who are socially, economically or educationally disadvantaged",
- "generally furthering the advancement of education to the end that all children, adolescents and adults may have full opportunities of the education needed for their complete individual and social development".

The WEA is one national association in England and Scotland, organised into 13 Districts in England and into a Scottish Association. It has over 650 local Branches, meeting the education and training needs of more than 100,000 adults per year. 28 national organisations, including 23 national trade unions, are affiliated to the WEA at national level.

The WEA has received financial support from Central Government for over 70 years, and since 1993 has been funded by the Further Education Funding Council as a specialist designated institution. It provides an excellent model of partnership between Government and the voluntary sector.

The WEA has a long tradition of engagement in international work, and maintains a growing programme of international development work, including global development education activities in England and Scotland, support for the development of workers' education programmes overseas, bilateral collaborative education work with a wide range of organisations, and active participation in IFWEA programmes.

IFWEA in Summary

The International Federation of Workers' Education Associations (IFWEA) is composed of more than 100 organisations in 54 countries active in the promotion and delivery of workers' education. Founded in 1947, largely at the initiative of the WEA, IFWEA affiliates include voluntary associations (such as the WEA), national and international trade union organisations, NGOs, and foundations concerned with adult education and international development.

IFWEA is constitutionally committed to promote "free and voluntary educational work according to the principles of solidarity and co-operation, justice and equality, democracy and freedom". It strives to promote education programmes that are internationalist and democratic - both in principle and in practice. Its programmes and activities are based on participatory learning methods, and on the

recognition that, in the global economy, workers' education has to have a strong international dimension.

IFWEA's secretariat is located in Oslo, with the Euro-WEA secretariat in Manchester; Regional networks are based in Cape Town, Lima, Budapest, and Manila.

1. Workers' Education and Civil Society

The workers' education movement, nationally and internationally, is a major agent for promoting and supporting civil society, through both the content and form of the learning experience it offers.

The WEA and its international partners provide local learning opportunities which strengthen an enormous range of civil society institutions including: trade unions, women's organisations, community groups, parent-governors, ethnic minority organisations and pensioners' groups.

Very often, workers' education provision arises specifically in response to demand for civil society development. There are numerous voluntary organisations that started life as a WEA course.

Just as importantly, the workers' education movement is committed to democratic forms of education - in the *design, management* and *delivery* of learning, and within the *process* of learning, which is itself a profound and powerful form of education for democracy. For many working class adults, over many decades, and in many countries, active membership in a WEA class, branch or management committee has been, and still remains a major formative experience equipping them for democratic participation - whether it be through their political party, trade union, local government body or in countless numbers of local or national voluntary associations.

The workers' education movement provides the intellectual stimulus and practical *tools* - literacy, political education, social awareness, critical thought - and the *outcomes* - self-confidence, collective responsibility, experience of self-management - for helping to construct civil society institutions.

The WEA's international programme, in partnership with organisations overseas, seeks to extend understanding and awareness of the global economy and society through the delivery of collaborative international education programmes, as a means of developing civil society on a global basis.

Internationally, workers' education programmes are frequently at the forefront of civil society construction. In many cases, such programmes are established under the sponsorship of trade unions where they are keen to extend education provision beyond mainstream trade union training to broader participatory education programmes in the community. This is often undertaken by NGOs, established specifically for the task, working with trade union support. They are particularly important in those countries where the trade union movement is virtually the only sustained civil society institution (central and eastern Europe provide vivid examples).

In practice, it is often a trade union national centre that provides the experience in participatory learning provision, be it in collective bargaining, health and safety, or in labour law. Such centres may be acutely aware of the lack of opportunities for others in the community, and wish to see an extension of education programmes into broader subjects, such as environmental protection, women's rights, community development, economics, and local democracy.

Through partnerships with others in the community, unions sponsor the development of voluntary organisations to undertake such programmes. Very often this is explicitly organised to support the development of civil society institutions: supporting or initiating women's' organisations, small farmers' groups, organisations of retired people, or environmental groups. They frequently seek to enable the self-organisation of those on the margins of employment, or those in the informal economy. Workers' education programmes, in these cases, are primarily designed to give people practical experience in democratic self-management, as well as confidence in collective working and decision-making.

2. International Development and Civil Society in the UK

The WEA applauds the Government's initiative in establishing the annual Development Policy Forum, and the implicit recognition that all sections of society have a valuable contribution to make in attaining international objectives.

This recognises a long-standing need to broaden the constituency of support for the international development agenda beyond the 'traditional' base of development NGOs and charities.

The success of the Forum, however, will depend on how effectively DfID can relate international development policies to the day-to-day concerns of community, workplace and home. This requires significant investment in new forms of global development education, placing domestic issues in a global context, and rooting global issues in local experience. The quality and breadth of Forum discussion will depend, to a large extent, on successful educational work at a local and regional level. Whilst it might be possible to achieve a considerable extension of formal representation from different sectors, the quality of contribution depends on preparatory planning, discussion and debate.

The WEA, through its Global Development Education programme, is committed to supporting this process. The WEA, at Branch, District and National levels has partnerships with a vast range of organisations in civil society - trade unions, parents' groups, women's organisations, community groups, voluntary organisations, environmental groups, and organisations of the disabled. With sufficient time and resources, the WEA intends to work with all such partners in developing understanding and awareness of processes of international development, encouraging them to become active partners in the Development Policy Forum - nationally and regionally - through structured educational programmes.

Much of the WEA's recent work in this field, working closely with trade unions and with the Development Education Association (DEA), has been to build our own capacity to deliver high quality courses or course components, through the development of new materials and training programmes for field staff and part-time tutors working across a broad spectrum of curricula and with a range of local partner organisations.

This programme now requires expansion and consolidation, in association with the DEA, trade unions and local authorities, if sustained programmes at a regional level are to be firmly established *and* capable of engaging civil society in informed and animated involvement in the international development agenda.

3. International Development and Global Civil Society

In addition to education programmes to support and broaden UK civil society engagement in international development, the WEA strongly supports the need for international education programmes designed to strengthen civil society on a global scale. The WEA supports also the need to engage civil society organisations overseas in monitoring and debating progress on delivering the targets set out in the White Paper.

Since 1996, IFWEA - along with many of its individual affiliated organisations - has prioritised international collaborative education provision around key issues of globalisation. These include, for example, programmes on the impact of transnational corporations, and the need to develop frameworks for international collective bargaining; on the causes and effects of globalisation in various industrial sectors (food production, manufacturing, tourism) for workers and consumers; on the organisation and defence of migrant workers; support for trade unions and civil society partners in bargaining for workers' rights in structural adjustment programmes; and on women working in the global economy.

Inevitably, much of this education activity has the practical objective of achieving compliance with 'core' labour standards. Indeed, to this effect many of IFWEA's affiliates are engaged directly with work supported by, or run in partnership with, the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

The main vehicle adopted by IFWEA for the development of transnational education programmes is the International Study Circles programme. This programme uses simple Internet technologies to globalise the local learning experience. It attempts to harness the communications power of new technologies with the best democratic and participatory traditions of workers' education, rooted in group-based learning at workplace or community level. IFWEA's pilot International Study Circles projects have provided a vibrant model, involving local groups in western and eastern Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America in common course activity, enhanced by transnational exchange of experience and views.

The further adoption of this model has the potential to provide many

new opportunities for creating and strengthening civil society organisations internationally. The strength of this approach, in the WEA's experience, is the provision of structured and participative education programmes, rather than reliance on *ad hoc* networking alone.

For the programme set out in the White Paper, International Study Circles may offer an innovative and cost-effective approach to the international engagement of civil society organisations in the implementation and monitoring of sustainable development targets.

4. Civil Society, Government and Partnerships

'Partnership' is difficult to define with precision. There is a need to develop a new vocabulary which recognises the many different qualities of partnership in many different conditions. Bilateral and multi-lateral partnerships between governments, different institutions of civil society, the private sector, North, South, East, rich, poor.... present a vast range of possible permutations.

Partnerships are rarely equal. Northern NGOs with access to charitable or governmental funds for international development programmes have power and resources not necessarily available to their Southern partners. Governments are not in an equal relationship with development NGOs. Private sector sponsors of development programmes do not have equality with recipient partner organisations in the community. And so on. Such inequalities need to be openly recognised and acknowledged by all parties concerned.

Nationally, Government has rights, privileges and resources, derived from its democratic mandate. This can lead to an inequality of partnership with non-governmental institutions of civil society, many of which are self-appointed or representative of a more narrowly defined, and often self-selecting, constituency.

On the other hand, the Government, as it recognises, cannot achieve the targets specified in the White Paper without support from civil society - either in the implementation of sustainable development policies, or in the development of public support for the strategy, so necessary for maintaining political will.

The important - inseparable - issues of partnership are clarity of purpose, consistency, transparency of procedures and the development of mutual trust. Partnership, in other words, requires open governance.

The publication of the White Paper itself is an important step towards this, with its statement of clear targets and objectives, from which progress can be monitored and evaluated. The establishment of the Development Policy Forum, although its long-term role is yet to evolve, could be vital to maintaining openness and clarity of Government purpose and policy.

The WEA welcomes the educational challenge of helping to equip civil society to take advantage of such an open and inclusive approach. Particular interest lies in supporting the involvement of less-educationally advantaged communities in the debates surrounding the regional and

national Development Policy Fora and elsewhere, and connecting local concerns with the global development agenda.

If the WEA's Global Development Education programme is at least partly successful, WEA classes across its range of provision will be informed by an internationalist, developmental approach. The WEA actively encourages the fusion of local and global perspectives. A course on housing, community development, women and health, or trade union rights should not make the distinction between development policy at local and international level. Such a perspective leads inevitably to demands for consistency. To take an obvious example: when the British Government advocates the observance of labour standards, such concern should be reflected in the practice of British law.

Government has a responsibility to promote and protect institutions of civil society. Education programmes are amongst the most effective means of achieving this - nationally and globally. This is equally valid, for example, in support for tenants groups, or allotment societies in the UK, as for grass-roots NGO's in the South. Of particular concern, however, is the need to recognise the acute lack of civil society capacity in the former communist states in central and eastern Europe. The White Paper is somewhat disappointing in this regard. The international workers' education movement views with alarm the virtual absence of any democratic civil society institutions in some countries, with the attendant under-development of democratic life and culture. Much needs to be done to support education programmes supportive of civil society development, particularly for and through democratic trade union movements.

To aid this process an expanded focus should be given to east-west initiatives. There is a strong case that civil society development in central and eastern Europe has as much to learn from partners in the south as in the west. Workers and communities in, say, Bulgaria, could have more to share and discuss with their counterparts in Brazil or South Korea, than they would with Austria or the USA.

The major domestic issue, of course, is how the international development agenda is reflected in Government's partnerships with British civil society in addressing their local and national concerns. Many of the specific policies detailed in the Building Partnerships section of the White Paper, if seriously applied in the UK, would have major implications, and require considerable inter-Departmental agreement and co-ordination within Government.

5. Civil Society and the Trade Union Movement

WEA and IFWEA place a strong emphasis on programmes in partnership with the trade union movement. This is partly the outcome of their traditions and origins. It is also, however, the result of a strong conviction that trade unions are one of the most important pillars of civil society. It is indeed difficult to identify any other social movement that has the same degree

of mass base, or levels of representative democracy.

Some trade unions may be far from perfect models of active democracy. Nevertheless, at international level, through the International Trade Secretariats and other institutions, they remain one of the strongest democratic formations committed to the core principles of equitable development.

Furthermore, trade unions are civil society institutions that - by definition - are at the heart of employment generation, economic development and wealth creation essential to the elimination of poverty. They are also among the first to experience, and organise around, the impact of globalisation in the economy. Despite enormous Regional and national disparity in trade union strength and influence, they nevertheless continue to play a major role in national and international policy development.

More needs to be done in encouraging the trade union movement in the processes of international development. This could include:

- supporting the role of trade unions in raising awareness of international development issues with their members,
- recognising the importance of local and national trade unions as agents in development processes,
- recognising the strategic importance of the international trade union movement as partners in the delivery of anti-poverty policies outlined in the White Paper.

6. Trade Unions and Development Awareness

In recent decades, successive waves of globalisation have transformed working lives and our lives outside of work. Yet still the notion of 'international development' has to struggle continually against popular negative images.

Accordingly, there is an urgent need to connect the day-to-day concerns of trade union members to the global issues which have an ever-increasing impact on local domestic agendas: be they pay and conditions, job security, health and safety or trade union rights. Today, the 'core standards' of the ILO are as relevant for workers in Britain and other industrialised countries as they are for workers in developing countries.

This is the agenda for global development education in UK trade unions. Increasingly, it is not the 'international officers' of trade unions who are driving the international trade union agenda, but the industrial sector representatives at local and national levels.

Support is required for those seeking to 'internationalise' local industrial experience. This could include, for example, trade union representatives on European Works Councils, thereby fostering a world, rather than an exclusively Europeanist view of development.

In similar fashion, employers should be encouraged to support trade union education programmes which address international development issues.

At a practical level, trade unions should be encouraged to offer training in languages, cultural mediation, and information and communication technologies. This would provide the practical skills to develop international partnerships with their trade union counterparts overseas.

7. Trade Unions as Agents of Civil Society

Trade unions are often at the forefront of struggles for basic human democratic rights in many, if not most, Regions of the world. In many countries, the trade union movement is the only substantial agent for democratic renewal.

The public recognition of the vital contribution of trade unionism to international development should be acknowledged. In many countries, most especially in Northern Europe, trade unions are accorded substantial status as partners to Governments in international development, and accorded the financial resources to match.

There is an urgent need for the Government to review relations with trade unions as important partners in the construction of civil society - both in the UK and overseas, including a review of the experience of partnership and cooperation arrangements developed in other countries.

8. International Trade Unions as Strategic Partners

The acknowledgement of the potential role of national trade unions should run side by side with close cooperation with international trade union organisations - both those representing national trade union centres: the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and the European Trade Union Council (ETUC); and those representing industrial sectors: the International Trade Secretariats (ITSs).

The ICFTU is relatively well-known to Governments and inter-Governmental agencies concerned with development, human rights, and trade. Its primary roles include liaison with inter-Governmental institutions and lobbying on global trade union and human rights issues.

The ITSs are perhaps less well known. However, in the context of current British international development policies, they have particular importance as the international representative organisations concerned with the practicalities of collective bargaining, trade union development and industrial change at sectoral level. Each of the ITSs has enormous practical knowledge of development questions that are relevant to the sectors in which they organise - manufacturing, mining, food production, tourism, banking, transport, press and media, and others.

Just as importantly, ITS structures and practices often enable them to operate much closer to the workplace, and have a direct relevance to the day-to-day work of trade union members and representatives. For many trade unionists, ITS meetings, conferences, publications and education programmes are their first

point of contact with workers from other countries and are a first introduction to international development questions.

ITSs thus perform an extremely important role in global development education - including awareness building for British trade union members. The most important aspect of this is the direct relevance of the international experience to day-to-day issues of trade union activity.

International trade union organisations also contribute to building civil society in those areas of the world in greatest need. This may be through direct support for democratic trade union organisation, or through broader education and development work - often in partnership with international and local NGOs. Their strength rests partly in their ability to organise from a truly global perspective, and - at times - ability to deliver developmental programmes on a world scale.

Nevertheless, most international trade union organisations constantly face major resource limitations. Very few trade unions are wealthy, and the international federations rely on modest contributions from national trade union affiliates. Partnerships with Governments, development agencies and NGOs are therefore of crucial importance in delivering development programmes. These partnerships need support and encouragement if the international trade union movement is to deliver its potential as a major contributor to the strengthening of civil society at a global level.

9. Summary of Views on the Specific Issues raised in the Consultation:

i) Engagement with workers' education organisations would enhance the British Government's international development policies and approaches through:

- building awareness and understanding of international development through the provision of education programmes on key international issues for workers, their families, and the communities in which they live - in the UK, in countries overseas, and through transnational collaboration,

- strengthening local, national and international civil society, by supporting the provision of democratic participative education.

ii) Further DfID engagement with workers' education organisations would better contribute to the elimination of world poverty through:

- educational support to trade unions and community-based workers' organisations in developing the bargaining and negotiating strength of the poor and the marginalised with employers, local and national Governments and inter-Governmental organisations.

iii) Workers' education organisations could assist DfID in influencing multilateral organisations by means of developing strategic partnerships on common objectives which aim to:

- strengthen the role of the International Labour Organisation in promoting core labour standards,
- expand UNESCO programmes for adult and workers' education in general, and on international development in particular,
- strengthen the contribution of trade unions in the Commission on Sustainable Development and other UN-related institutions,
- strengthen the voice of workers and local communities in negotiations with the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, Regional Development Banks and the World Trade Organisation,
- ensure that the European Union is fully committed to an internationalist (rather than narrowly Europeanist) development agenda that respects workers' rights - including those of migrant workers.

iv) Engagement between DfID and workers' education organisations offers opportunities in promoting more effective awareness of development issues through:

- extending the domestic and international constituencies to include those normally excluded from participation through lack of educational, social or financial opportunity,
- linking core concepts of international sustainable development with the day-to-day issues of the workplace and/or the local community through structured local education provision,
- innovative programmes of collaborative transnational education, such as the International Study Circles initiative.

v) Workers' education organisations can help build the capacity of civil society organisations through:

- education programmes specifically designed to strengthen the capacity of civil society organisations, through improved management skills and volunteer training,
- education programmes designed to equip individuals with the democratic skills, self-confidence, and practical experience of collective decision-making required to build vibrant local, national and international civil society organisations,
- the development of transnational partnerships between workers' education organisations, trade unions, NGOs, and - where appropriate - Governments and employers, to strengthen the capacity of democratic workers' organisations in the South and in the former communist states in central and eastern Europe.

vi) Circumstances under which workers' education organisations should be involved in service delivery should include:

- adult education provision, where Governments respect the democratic rights of the service provider to undertake education programmes without interference from the state.

vii) Where the Government is ineffective, or where there is contested governance, workers' education organisations may be able to:

- strengthen trade union and community organisations, where circumstances permit such organisations to function freely,
- organise international support and awareness for workers seeking basic human and trade union rights.

viii) Mechanisms that could be used to ensure that engagement with workers' education organisations is meaningful and manageable include:

- clear statements of Government policy and purpose on the role of trade unions and workers' education organisations in processes of international development,
- clearly explained anticipated outcomes of national or international meetings and conferences convened by DfID to which civil society organisations are invited.

ix) Arrangements/mechanisms for working with DfID in areas of mutual interest could be improved through:

- a better distinction drawn between the availability of grants to undertake activities initiated by civil society organisations, and contracts awarded to civil society organisations to undertake activities on behalf of Government.

x) General principles which should apply to all DfID/civil society organisation relationships should include:

- where appropriate, an explicit statement on the status of the relationship, whether it be as partner, service provider, contractor, consultant or grant recipient,
- a demonstrable committment to equal opportunities policies by all partner organisations.

xi) DfID can fulfil its commitment to consult externally with civil society organisations through:

- making freely available information on consultation processes, including clear statements of intended outcomes of consultation.

Further information on the international programmes of the WEA or on IFWEA can be obtained from:

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Organisations affiliated to the Workers' Educational Association

Banking, Insurance and Finance Union
Ceramic and Allied Trades Union
Communication Managers Association (MSF)
Co-operative Union Limited
Co-operative Wholesale Society Limited
Fircroft College of Adult Education
Fire Brigades Union
General Federation of Trade Unions
GMB
Graphical Paper and Media Union
Iron and Steel Trades Confederation
Manufacturing Science Finance
Musicians' Union
National Association of Schoolmasters, Union of Women Teachers
National Union of Insurance Workers
National Union of Journalists
National Union of Knitwear, Footwear and Apparel Trades
National Union of Marine Aviation and Shipping Transport Officers
National Union of Teachers
Pre-school Learning Alliance
Public and Commercial Services Union
Ruskin College
Society of Telecom Executives
Trades Union Congress
Transport and General Workers' Union
Transport Salaried Staffs' Association
UNISON
Union of Shop Distributive and Allied Workers

Organisations affiliated to the International Federation of Workers' Education Associations (IFWEA)

WEA of South Australia
Berufsförderungsinstitut Wien, Austria
Karl Renner Institut, Austria
Verband Wiener Volkbildung, Austria
The Barbados Wokers' Union, Barbados
Centre Socialiste d'Education Permanente, Belgium
Centrale voor Socialistisch Cultuurbeleid, Belgium
Education International, Belgium
Confederation of Independant Trade Unions in Bulgaria (CITUB), Bulgaria
Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), Canada
WEA, Canada
Escuela Nacional Sindical Antioquia, Colombia
Instituto Mariá Cano, Colombia
Cyprus Workers' Confederation, Cyprus
Czech-Moravian Chamber of Trade Unions - Trade Union School (CMTU), Czech Republic
Arbejdernes Oplysningsforbund (AOF), Denmark
Instituto do Formacion Social y Sindical, Dominican Republic
Open Education Association, Estonia
Työväen Akatemia, Finland
Työväen Sivistyliitto (TSL), Finland
Culture et Liberté, France
Fédération Nationale Léo Lagrange, France
Arbeit und Leben, Germany
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Hungarian Workers' Representation Foundation, Hungary
National Confederation of Hungarian Trade Unions (MSZOSZ), Hungary
Menningar- og Frædslusamband Althydu, Iceland
Indian Adult Education Association, India
Irish Congress of Trade Unions, Ireland
People's College for Continuing Education and Training, Ireland
Services, Industrial, Professional, Technical Union, Ireland
Beit-Berl College, Israel
Efal Seminar, Israel
Histadrut-General Federation of Labour in Israel
International Center for Peace in the Middle East, Israel
The International Institute of the Histadrut, Israel
Istituto Superiore per la Formazione, Italy
Joint Trade Unions Research Development Centre, Jamaica
Institute of Labour Education and Culture, Japan

Kenya Women Workers' Organisation, Kenya
Korea Labour and Society Institute, Korea
Raina un Aspazijas Fonds, Latvia
Lithuanian Labour Education Society, Lithuania
Guzé Ellul Mercer Foundation, Malta
General Workers' Union, Malta
Mauritius Labour Congress, Mauritius
State Employees' Federation, Mauritius
The Centre for Citizenship Education, Mongolia
Mongolian Labour Institute, Mongolia
Partij van der Arbeid, Netherlands
Federation of WEA's in Aotearoa/New Zealand, New Zealand
Arbeidernes Opplysningsforbund (AOF), Norway
Pakistan Institute of Labour Education & Research, Pakistan
Programa Laboral de Desarrollo, Peru
Labour Education and Research Network, Phillippines
Network of Labor Institutions, Phillippines
Fundacão José Fontana, Portugal
União Geral de Trabalhadores, Portugal
Slovak Confederation of Trade Unions, Slovak Republic
Fundación Pablo Iglesias, Spain
Fundación Francisco Largo Caballero, Spain
International Labour Resource & Information Group, South Africa
The Trade Union Library & Education Centre, South Africa
Workers' College, South Africa
Workers' Education Project, South Africa
Arbetarnas Bildningsförbund (ABF), Sweden
Gewerkschaftliche Bildungszentrale Schweiz/Institut de Formation Syndicale de Suisse, Switzerland
Global Labour Institue (GLI), Switzerland
International Metalworkers' Federation (IMF), Switzerland
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The Workers' Educational Association exists primarily to provide adults with access to experience of organised learning which develops intellectual understanding, confidence and social and collective responsibility. Particular features of its approach to the provision of learning opportunities for adults include:

Valuing and making use of students' life experience

•

Involving students in organising provision and planning their own learning

•

Targeting students who have benefited least from the education system and from opportunities for further and higher education

•

Collaborating with other organisations and agencies to meet the needs of adult learners for educational guidance, equal access to provision, and for relevant, progressive and accredited learning opportunities

•

Offering high quality learning experiences underpinned by regular monitoring and evaluation of the programme

•

Providing staff development opportunities for professional staff and training for voluntary members

•

Promoting and supporting the voluntary movement by which the Association governs itself and decides its future strategy

WORKERS' EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION
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